

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China (Sinkiang Province)

SUBJECT The Chinese Population of Sinkiang

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1. Number in Sinkiang: The Chinese population of Sinkiang, according to a 1941 survey, numbered 202,239, or a little over 5.4% of the total population. To distinguish the Chinese from the Moslem Chinese, the Tungans, the Chinese in Sinkiang are called Han and the Tungans Hui.
2. History of the Chinese in Sinkiang: The first record of Chinese penetration into the area which is now called Sinkiang (New Frontier) was accomplished by a Chinese noble, Chang Chien, more than a century before Christ. He was sent to spy out the secrets of Hsi-yu (Western Territory) by Emperor Wu-ti of the Han Dynasty. Out of the one hundred men that accompanied Chang on this mission only two men returned. From that time on, however, contact with Hsi-yu was never entirely ceased. The Chinese in Sinkiang have intermittently figured among the important population groups of that area, but not as colonisers who displaced the native population. In between the periods of their ascendancy they remained an alien minority, made up of traders, professional soldiers and criminal exiles. The first two categories, in most cases, could not long bear the alien surroundings of Sinkiang and returned to their homeland or disappeared in savage Moslem massacres. Those that could not return to their homelands, the exiles, built walled cities and were in time joined by their countrymen who were driven from the central provinces because of a shortage of agricultural land. As these exiles increased in number others found it easier to remain in Sinkiang and, in the course of time, the Chinese population increased. From the time of the first Chinese penetration, and especially during the Manchu rule, Sinkiang was used as a land to which both political and criminal exiles were banished.

In the Sinkiang war of 1862 to 1874 the great Hunanese general Tso Chung-t'ang led his forces across the deserts to suppress the revolt of the Moilas, led by Yakub Beg. The troops of General Tso were composed mainly of men from Hunan and some from Hupah. Since land in these provinces was scarce, some of his troops remained in Sinkiang after the completion of the campaign. Some became landowners and officials in the

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provincial government, in which they exercised such dominating influence that Sinkiang became known as a "Hunanese colony". General Tso's expeditionary force was accompanied by large numbers of Tientsin merchants who sold to the army en route and then settled down in Sinkiang. Often they perished by the way, sometimes they were robbed and murdered, but the instinct of trade triumphed over every difficulty. They were later joined by their families, so that Tientsin traders soon appeared throughout the urban centers of Sinkiang. Once the traders had opened up the country, migration on a larger scale began. Kansu, Shensi, Shansi, Szechwan were overcrowded and the surplus population slowly flowed to the west.

During the rule of Governor Yang Tseng-hsin (1911 to 7 Jul 28) many of his fellow provincials from Yunnan came to Sinkiang to get aboard the "grave train". Despite this fact, his seventeen years of reign were referred to in Sinkiang as "The Period of Golden Rule". During this period Sinkiang became known, in other parts of China, as "The Earthly Paradise". After the assassination of Governor Yang, Chin Shu-jen became Governor of Sinkiang (7 Jul 28 to 12 Apr 33) and was followed by men from Kansu. Later some 10,000 Chinese troops from Manchuria, interned in Siberia when they had retreated after fighting against the Japanese, were repatriated by the Soviet Union to Sinkiang after General Sheng Shih-tsai, a native of Manchuria, became Governor (12 Apr 33 to 2 Sep 44). Governor Sheng's reign of terror and oppression ended when he was replaced by Wu Chung-hsin (2 Sep 44 to July 1946). In this year refugees from the Honan famine were transported into Sinkiang and settled on land that was expropriated from the Kazakhs. Governor Wu was replaced by General Chang Chih-chung (July 1946 to 31 May 47). The next Governor of Sinkiang was Messud Sabri (31 May 47 to December 1948), the first "native" Governor of Sinkiang. He was a Uighur leader whose Chinese name is Masu Wu-tak. Messud Sabri was replaced in December 1948 by Burkhan Shahidi, a Russian Tatar who had been a man of influence in Sinkiang since Tsarist times. He was Governor on 29 Sep 49 when Sinkiang made a formal declaration of adherence to the Communist regime. In the last years of the Kuomintang rule in Sinkiang there were over 100 thousand Nationalist troops stationed there.

3. **Language:** The majority of Chinese in Sinkiang speak the Mandarin dialect of the Chinese language. Apart from the official class, the Chinese in Sinkiang appear to be no less illiterate than those in the rest of China.
4. **Religion:** The Chinese in Sinkiang have remained Buddhists and in that respect have three other minority "races" as their allies, the Manchus, Sibos and Solons. These four peoples are all Confucian-Buddhist-Taoist in religion and number 214,601 people, or 5.7% of the total population. The Mongols, who are Lama Buddhists, total 63,016, or 1.5% of the population. The White Russians, who are Greek Orthodox, total 13,408 people and comprise only .36% of the population. The Mohammedans, on the other hand total 3,439,024, or 92.22% of the total population of Sinkiang.
5. **Dress:** The Chinese in Sinkiang have retained their customary manner of dress and do not dress there any differently than they do in the large coastal cities.
6. **Concentrations:** Since the Chinese are a very small minority in Sinkiang they do not constitute a majority population in any given area of the province. The Chinese culture in Sinkiang, however, centers around Urumchi (Tihwa), the capital. There are also large numbers of Chinese in most northern cities, especially Kwei (Qomul), Kuchengtsie (Kital), Kuldja (Ining) and Chuguchek (Tancheng). South of the Tien Shan range there are very few Chinese, only a handful residing in each of the major cities. An accurate method by which to determine if there are Chinese residing in any Sinkiang city, or village, is to learn whether there is a brewery or pork butcher's shop there.
7. **Dwellings:** The Chinese live either in farmsteads scattered in the fields or in apartments which range along the narrow streets of oasis towns and cities. Their houses are constructed of mud and brick and are very much like those of the Uighurs, with the exception that the roof is flat and projects beyond the

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- walls and they do not have chimneys. The Chinese in Sinkiang use coke in their in-door, shallow, open pits which are used for cooking and also in the "kang". The kang is a large, low, flat, brick furnace which is covered with mud and straw matting and used by all the members of the family to sleep upon. There is usually no furniture in the single-room house, the floors being covered with straw matting.
8. Eating Habits: The Chinese are considered, by the other peoples of Sinkiang, as extremely light eaters. Their diet consists of 80% cereal, 10% meat and 10% vegetables. The foods that they eat are identical to those eaten by Chinese in other provinces.
 9. Occupations: All the Chinese who came to Sinkiang were industrious to begin with, however, with increasing prosperity some of the exiles fell victims of the opium habit. Those from Shensi, Shansi and Kansu are said to be most addicted to opium and many of them allowed the vice to obtain so terrible a hold that they ceased to labor and are content to sink into poverty. The emigrants from Tientsin became the wealthy and influential classes in the communities. They were both industrious and honest so that in time all local business centered around them. There was principally a commerce in tea, silk and spices and the commodities for which these things were exchanged were furs, skins, jade and rare metals. The Han Chinese became mainly the administrators, soldiers, traders, businessmen and shopkeepers. The Chinese who reside there now divide sharply along provincial lines as to their occupations. Hunanese and men from the lower Yangtze Valley have long formed the bureaucratic elite; Tientsin men hold the strongest position in trade, Shansi men control the camel caravans carrying goods between Sinkiang and North China and are particularly known as money-lenders, Hunan and Hopen men are dealers in brick tea and Kansu Province has been the principal source of farming colonists.
 10. General Problems: The position of the Chinese in Sinkiang has been a curious one. The Chinese have always been a small minority, only 5.4% of the total population in 1941. During Moslem religious uprisings the Chinese and their usual allies, the White Russians, Mongols, Manchus, Sibes and Solons, still only comprised 7.73% of the total population of Sinkiang. Yet, instead of following a program of attempting to minimize the differences between the various peoples of Sinkiang and uniting them under a democratic form of government, they have ignored the wishes of the majority and have ruled by oppression, persecution, trickery and fraud. The reallocation of land belonging to Sinkiang "natives" for the purpose of including Chinese "outlanders" has long been a touchy subject. The result has been that the Moslem peoples of Sinkiang, with each passing year, have learned to ever increasingly resent the Chinese minority rule and have become more nationalistic and desirous of autonomy from China. The Chinese rule in Sinkiang has been especially poor and corrupt because the provincial administrators have considered the non-Chinese as simple "natives" and also because of Sinkiang's remoteness from the capital of China and thus higher authority. The Chinese officials stationed there have not engaged in the defense of old vested interests, but in the acquisition of new personal interests, wealth and power. This attitude, on the part of the officials, has caused unrest and cost many innocent Chinese lives during the frequent bloody Moslem massacres.

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